

---

# Memphis Maxims

**By Hugh Francis III, MD**

*At the UT College of Medicine, rising third-year medical students usually begin their clinical rotations during the first week of May. In preparation, UT has historically educated these students in risk management, where they learn, among many other things, the importance of their patients' knowing, trusting, and liking them. The students are taught the value of common courtesy in showing a patient how deeply he or she is cared about and valued. These "Memphis Maxims" were developed to guide the medical students toward success in patient care, beginning with that first encounter. We thought they would be of interest to all our policyholders, so Dr. Francis has kindly allowed us to share them with you in *The Sentinel*.*

- Enter the room with a smile. Make eye contact with and address everyone in the room: patient, family, and visitors alike.
- Sit down. This makes you appear unhurried and allows you to communicate on the same eye level without looking down on the patient.
- Ask questions and LISTEN to the answers. Do not interrupt very often.
- Touch the patient where the problem is. No visit should end without having touched the patient.
- Do charting or computer entry at the bedside when possible. This extends visit time and is perceived by the patient as added encounter time.
- Never talk with your hand on the door knob.
- Leave the door open or closed and the lights on or off as the patient prefers. The patient might remember this the most about your visit.

---

*The contents of *The Sentinel* are intended for educational/informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice. Policyholders are urged to consult with their personal attorney for legal advice, as specific legal requirements may vary from state to state and/or change over time.*